New College, Edinburgh
March 1839

Dear Brethren in Christ

According to our annual custom, we write to those whom we believe to be like-minded with ourselves, & in whom for the sake of old associations, or from a similarity of purpose & position, we as Members of the New College Missionary Society, feel an especial interest. How great & manifold are the reasons for such an interchange of brotherly sympathy. Though long distances divide us, we are one in our allegiance to a common Lord & Master — one in our dependence on Him for that life by which alone our souls can be sustained in spiritual health — one in our desire to do good and further the cause & Kingdom of Christ as we have opportunity — one in our hopes of a blessed immortality of rest, when our work of life is done. Thus may we hold up each other's hands & cheer each other's hearts. Thus may we enkindle each other's love to Christian brethren & to Him who is the elder brother of the family and the Head of the Church, into a warmer and brighter flame, and so grow stronger and more faithful in the strength of God, till we shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.

It is drawing near the close of another Session, & now we look backward & forward upon our own work and prospects, & come most naturally at such a time to think of you, of the goodwill which we bear to each other, of your work and labour of love, and of the need which we all have to seek together a security against weakness & temptation at the throne of Heavenly Grace. We have had much to cheer & keep us in good heart, both in the Spirit, which God has been graciously pleased to keep alive in us, and in the encouragements which we have received from without. Here in this City we are especially privileged as a Society; for at our Saturday morning meetings, we are almost always favoured with the presence of some one, who from his experience in the Mission-field, or from some intimate connection with it, is able to supply us with interesting details, & to enforce on us the obligation of holding up before all men the light of saving truth.

During the Session we have had many such precious opportunities; and it has been pleasant to see that very many of the Students of the new College have availed themselves of them; for our meetings have been largely attended. Indeed we may venture to say, that there is amongst us a growing earnestness & evangelical Spirit. Such a spirit we find to be fostered and encouraged by our Profession, so that we & they become bound not merely by a community of Academical interests, but in the bonds of that holy love and

sympathy which subsists among those who have it for the highest aim of their lives to establish and build up the Kingdom of God. Yet in all this would we rejoice with trembling; for wife not our condemnation be the greater, if we have trifled with our privileges, & have been dead and cold in heart in the midst of so much life. As we have so many influences for good bearing upon us, we feel along with them a heavy responsibility. May God grant to us to feel it more; may the Holy Spirit give us strength to bear it, and be faithful unto death, that we may win the crown of life.

A part of our business always most pleasing had been our intercourse with students from other lands, who have come to study in our College. Strangers from the Continent of Europe have addressed us and spoken to us words of eloquence and brotherly love. Perhaps they think us cold and grave in manner, but to such as they we bear an enthusiastic affection in our hearts, and these meetings with them afford us an opportunity of giving a hearty ex- to our feelings, which at other times may be only silently cherished. To hear from them or from others, of students in other Colleges, who are animated by the same spirit with ourselves, gives us a special pleasure.

Our Society has subsisted for a sufficiently long period to have some very tender ties to Missionary work in all its branches, through the presence in Mission fields of labourers, who in the years of their College

life were active and distinguished members. To these wherever they may be, we rejoice to look with an unforgetting affection; and to receive communications from them is like hearing the voices of old & well-beloved friends. There comes, however, a shade of sadness over us, when we hear, as we must sometimes do, of a standard-bearer falling — of the hand which had gracefully lifted up a banner for the truth struck down and stiffened in death — of the voice which was learning to speak more eloquently of the truths of God silenced for ever. Since we despatched our annual letters last year, it has been our lot to lose one whose name was known & loved among us, and who had gone far hence to do his Master's work. We do not fail to listen to the voice which comes to us from his grave in China, summoning us to work as he worked, that we may die as he died. We seek in humble dependence on the Spirit of God to attain to somewhat of his love and enthusiasm and missionary zeal, that being found faithful as he was we may go forth with gladness to meet our Lord at his coming. The blank which has thus been created in the Chinese mission is to be filled by another at present a member of our Society, and who goes forth in the strength of the same faith in God and the same gospel truths. May he be abundantly aided & blessed; and honoured to be a suc-

cessful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord.

Our work is not confined, however, to hearing of the labours of others and praying for a portion of their spirit, for in the dark and destitute districts of our city we have many opportunities for Evangelistic labour laid to our hand. A large majority of the Students at the New College spend a part of their time in one capacity or another for the elevation into Christian light and liberty of the sunken multitudes. The work is often arduous and discouraging by reason of its many difficulties; but it is God's work, and in the conviction of that we go forward looking for the promised blessing. We rejoice in this way by our own labour to add something to the work of Evangelisation in Edinburgh.

The subscriptions which we are able to raise, besides being appropriated in part to those departments of the foreign field in which we feel a special interest, are devoted to the maintenance of one of our own number as a regular Missionary in the West Port, perhaps the most degraded district in the City. He meets with many difficulties, but works on steadily and does not despair of receiving the increase at the hands of God.

It remains to us now only to wish you a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit, & to supplicate our

common Lord for you and ourselves, that he will be merciful unto us, and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us; that his way may be known upon the earth, his saving health among all nations. It will be a great gratification to us to receive some communication from you, and to hear how the Lord is prospering you in all your work

In the name of the Society
Your brethren in the Lord
R. A. Macaulay President
Charles S McNeil Sec. p. t.

To the Students of the
Presbyterian College
Princeton